Sermons Part 2248

REV. DR. POST'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

PREACHED AT SALEM, MASS.

OCTOBER 2, 1871.

THE MINISTRANT CHURCH.

A

SERMON

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

MEETING IN SALEM, MASS.

OCTOBER 3, 1871,

BY

REV. TRUMAN M. POST, D. D.

OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

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American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

SALEM, MS., OCTOBER 3, 1871.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. TRUMAN M. POST, for his sermon preached Tuesday evening, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

J. O. MEANS, *Recording Secretary.*

SERMON.

Brethren and Fathers:—

As I rise to address you this evening, I feel oppressed by the genius of the place. A scene presses on me from what now seems the far past. On this spot, if not within these walls, nearly sixty years ago, was the ordination of the first missionaries of the American Board. Here, on February 6th, 1812, in the presence of a vast and profoundly sympathizing assembly, Hall, Newell, Judson, Nott and Rice, were solemnly set apart to the work of Foreign Missions. The actors, and most of the spectators, have long since passed to other worlds. But they seem to me gathering again to this place, this hour, to inaugurate your assembling. Hovering over and around us, seem to my eye faces that are not of clay. May the words I shall utter before you to-night, approve themselves to those on whose ears are falling the voices of eternity.

I have selected, as presenting timely theme for the occasion, the words of our Master and Model, found in

MATTHEW xx. 28.

THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, BUT TO MINISTER, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.

In this and the preceding verses, Christ's example is set forth as the rule for his disciples. "Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a

ransom for many." The proper import of the word "minister," is servant, and to minister is to extend service through kindly offices, beneficent instruction and bestowment,—labors, sufferings, sacrifices. Our Lord has also taught us that "the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall find it." "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple:" and he subjoined, as his valediction when he left the world, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The law of greatness in the kingdom of heaven is ministration, set forth in God himself as its prime archetype, who ministers the universe to the universe; in his Son, who ministered himself for the ransom of many; in the all-quickening Spirit, who ministers life to moral being; in the angelic orders who are ever ministrant spirits; and in the church, whose office it is, to the end of time, to minister the lifted-up Christ to the world, by like vicarious suffering and sacrifice. Such ministry is God's charm of persuasion, and such the church's law of victory amid the lost nations.

We are assembled here, brethren, in this year of grace, 1871, in missionary convocation, to commune together, for the time, on the great problem of the conversion of the world—the consummation assured by prophets, apostles, and the Son of God, and commanded as the object of prayer, to the church, through the ages. Toward it the centuries past have wrought under divine rule, slowly it may seem to us, but surely; and out on the deeps, though far off still it seems, yet manifestly in nearer distance, we may descry the brightness of the burning wheels of the coming of the Lord.

If we look at the present situation as compared with the past, we discover vast progress, vast preparation, and vast expectation. Vast the progress since the resurrection morning. The faith of the crucified Nazarene embraces the civilized world. Christianity is incorporate with the life and thought of humanity. It is armed with art, literature, science, wealth and empire. It is the

religion of the mightiest nations. It possesses the domain of history. It is clearly the mightiest power on earth, at this present, and bearing within itself the destinies of the future.

In regard to missionary enterprise, compared with past times the field is clear; the world is open and explored. Mundane agencies, political and social, empires and systems—with their changes, wars, migrations, conquests, colonizations—have been working their preparation. Commerce, adventure, travel and ambition have been pioneering the way. Science, art, letters, culture, and the forces of civilization have been wrought into auxiliaries. The enfranchisement of nations, the liberation of minds, the spread of general ideas, and the advancement toward a world-unity in the realm of thought, are elaborating a capacity for a universal spiritual reign.

Within the sphere of the church, also, vast preparations have been in progress. Missionary consciousness and enterprise have been aroused and enlightened; missionary agencies instituted, organized and systematized, and applied extensively to the strongholds of heathen religion and empire. Christian truth has been widely diffused; the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—unsheathed and presented ready to the hand of the church, in that the Holy Scriptures have been translated into nearly all the languages of the known world; some of which have been reduced to writing expressly to receive the sacred gift. Copies of them, or of thoughts born of them, have been scattered like leaves of the Tree of Life on the wings of all the winds of heaven. The steam press, the steam ship, and the telegraph, have been made ready to minister the new-creative truth to the nations.

Signs, meanwhile, that this truth has lost none of its primitive power, but is as mighty now as at the resurrection of Christ, thickening in the missionary field and showing that the Pentecostal power still waits with Him that has the residue of the Spirit,—these, blending with these preparatory agencies, seem marshaling on the universal triumph of the kingdom of God.

Now in this hour of vast preparation and expectancy, what waits, what wants within the sphere of the church, to secure the mighty prize so clearly in view? Has the church risen to the height of the occasion—to the plane of her great mission? Does

she realize, does she adequately conceive, even, her true ministrant mission and position—the true nature and office of the Christian life on earth? Our Lord's definition and assignment by his own example, enforced by his precept as a model for all disciples—are they not construed extensively, as extreme and exceptional? Do we not, by extenuation and abatement, fritter away language the most explicit and categorical? Are not our senses so dulled by custom, or so dazed by worldly illusion, that "seeing we do not perceive, and hearing we do not understand" that Christ in very deed meant what he said, and meant it for us and now, when he presented his own example in coming into the world—not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many—as a paradigm for all who would be his disciples?

Requirements the most explicit and unequivocal, of *entire* consecration, *absolute* devotion, *complete* self-sacrifice; of *forsaking all that one hath;* of living not to ourselves but to the Lord who hath bought us; of *unreserved*, *universal ministration of self to the great cause*,—are not such requirements subdued by construction into *figurative*, *intensitive*, *exaggerated* utterances,—into something *not entire*, *not absolute*, *not universal*,—something partial, occasional, exceptional? But surely He who was the very Truth, would not, in a matter of such awful concernment, palter with us in a double sense, would not deal in phrase or figure, overdrawing the reality, or leave the law of Christian life confused by *overstatement*, or subject to the limitations of individual convenience or caprice. And never, we believe, till the church gives *full* and *vigorous interpretation* to her Master's commission and requirements, and recognizes her *true calling*, *to be in this world as was her Lord*—"not to be ministered unto but to minister,"—to minister her labors, her prayers, her wealth, her children, her best, her all for the glory of the Lord and the life of the world,—never till she becomes profoundly conscious that a life thus ministering is the *gladdest*, *noblest*, *grandest beneath the sun*, will she reach "the height of her great argument" for the conversion of the world.

But are not our churches full, this hour, of those who seem to regard church-life as *passive* rather than active, *exacting* rather

than imparting—who are in the church, not to minister but to be ministered unto—to find enjoyment and repose—to be *waited on, cultivated, caressed* and *insured* for *Heaven*—not to be servants of all, but to be served of all? To them, it would appear, the earthly church is as though already within the walls of the New Jerusalem.

But evermore the *church militant* is the *church ministrant*—ministrant of her very self for the life of the world. She *wars* by ministration. She *saves life* by losing it for Christ. She gains all things by giving up all things. She contends with the ministries of truth and love. She *subdues* the world by devoting herself for it; by ministering her pleasures and convenience, her comforts, her toil, her gold, her sons and her daughters; whatever she has most precious, yea, life itself, for human redemption. She overcomes by self-sacrifice for the wretched, the ignorant, the hateful, the sinful. Like her Lord, she is victor through vicarious suffering. She conquers by dying. By crucifixion she casts down the prince of darkness. By entering the grave she breaks the gates of hell. Above her onward march, over the ensign of the Son of God, bearing on his own cross the sins of a world, gleams evermore the blazon, "*In hoc vince.*"

This self-ministration to the cause is essential to the triumph of Christianity; because, 1st. It is essential to its very existence. It is of its original vital essence, the very element and condition of its being, even as shining is the condition of light.

In the 2d place, it is to the world the proof-impress of the original archetype—its divine attestation.

3d. It is *God's persuasion*—his continued argument, of the Christ lifted up, with a fallen race; yet a race not *so fallen* as to fail to recognize this proof of celestial original, or to be insensible to this manifestation of the beauty of God. The world in its moral ruin, still feels the divine charm of *self-sacrificing love.*

"He that will be greatest of all shall be servant of all," is written even in this world's code of honor. The ministration of self for others it recognizes as the royal mark on grand and beautiful souls. It feels it to be the God-like,—the very love-

liest, kingliest thing among the sons of men. Wherever it meets or thinks it meets it, in hero, patriot, philanthropist or martyr, it does it reverence. It honors, celebrates and worships it, as something from heaven. It becomes the orator's theme, the *inspiration* of the *poet*, the *ideal* of the *artist*. To it the nations institute festivals, build monuments, temples, and Westminsters. Spirits signalized by it walk the earth in light. They break in upon its night with the gladness of sunbeams. Sweeter than music are their names to the forlorn and wretched. Like angel-faces, their thought wanders through the hospital and asylum, or hovers over the eyes of the desolate and dying. The less the suspicion of selfish alloy, the farthest the apparent removal from ambition of eclat, the more men love and worship; so that the humblest, obscurest and most hidden life in which this self-ministry moves, becomes, to our world's night, as those star-fields whose lights, dimmest to earth, shine in holiest height, and nearest to God's throne. Such is its charm, even to our fallen world.

Its primal archetype is set forth in the ever-and-all-ministering God, whose name and essence is love, whose glory is the effluence of love, who is greatest of all as He ministers to all. Its imprint is on the elder and mightier sons of light, whose glory and bliss it is that they are all ministering spirits. It is incarnated in "God manifest in the flesh," vindicating the divine son-ship of him, who, "though rich, for our sakes became poor," and who, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

This spirit, incorporate with the idea and being of the church, and breathing through it as its organ of perpetual utterance, is God's eloquence with men,—his signature on his church; recognized as such by the world, whose conversion waits its full manifestation.

That this ministrant spirit must make proof of itself in *missions*, I need not argue. The church ministrant must, by its very definition and original constitution and commission, be the church missionary,—a church that goes forth from home

and country, to seek and save the alien and the lost. Originating in a mission from heaven to a ruined world, it must, of its very nature, go forth from realms illuminated to peoples that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Everywhere, indeed, it must be animated by the missionary spirit—the spirit of self-devotion for the salvation of men. The life of every true Christian is a mission; cannot, must not be aught else; no more on the banks of the Hudson or Mississippi than on those of the Ganges, the Hoangho, or the Niger.

But evidently it is essential to the full development of the nature of the church, and especially, its full proof of itself before the world, that it go forth on the *foreign* mission. Benefactions to our country may be regarded as benefactions to ourselves, and patriotism may be construed as an expanded self-love. But the foreign mission eminently impresses the world as of that "charity which seeketh not her own;" which gives proof of its God-likeness in that it is without color of selfishness, and is universal. Not only the Roman theatre, but the whole race of man rises up to do homage to the Terentian assertion of a catholic humanity,—"I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me."

Moreover, a true home-evangelization requires it. As an expression and a culture of Christly love, and of sympathy with the life-spirit of Christianity, the mission abroad is vital to the church at home. To limit Christianity geographically, violates its nature. It is ubiquitous in its reach, or it is nothing. To partialize the universal, introduces a fatal solecism into its nature. It is, moreover, clear disloyalty to the original divine commission, and as such must be fatal to its life-power. Indeed, in breaking up the spiritual torpor and narrowness wont to gather upon churches that are content to shut up their Christian sympathies within their own borders, the reflex benefits of foreign missions can hardly be over-estimated. In truth, such are the ultimate relations, now, between different parts of the world, that it could be readily shown that missions are richly remunerative in the light of a true, moral, we might even add, political economy, to home interests.

But the foreign mission is especially valuable in the profound

and striking impression it makes on the world generally, of a ministrant Christianity,—of an entire and absolute ministration of self for the salvation of men.

I speak now of *impression on the world*. Every Christian life, at home or abroad, is in truth such a ministration. Its consecration is entire or nothing. "Whosoever forsaketh not *all* that he hath, cannot be my disciple," is the law as much in Christian America as in India or Central Africa. And in general, I believe, such a life involves as much sacrifice and brings as much happiness in one field as in another. It is the great *first step* which costs, in either. And it is more *what* we are, than *where*, that fixes the happiness as well as nobleness of life. These are determined more by loyalty to our professed self-consecration, its entirety and absoluteness, than any or all exterior circumstances whatsoever.

Nevertheless the foreign mission presents such self-devotion in a form which especially strikes the sense of the world. The denial of instinctive sentiments, common to all men and appreciable by all men; the sundering of ties universally felt as among the strongest on earth—those of home, kindred, country; the voluntary surrender of the sweets of civilization and culture, for perpetual exile amid dark-souled, barbarous, or semi-barbarous and pagan peoples; such a sacrifice,—visible, summary, absolute, irrevocable,—especially impresses the world with the sense of a faith and love above its plane of being, and having origin in higher realms. It also touches the mind of the church at large with a true consciousness of her calling.

In corrupt and apostate ages, such examples of consecration have been exponential of the divine life immanent in the church. They appear like pulses of the consciousness of a higher world breaking in upon a torpid and stagnant worldly church-life.

That the enthusiastic and imaginative sentiments have often had to do with the origin and enterprise of foreign missions, as also with their impression on the popular mind, cannot be denied. But who shall deny that these sentiments, though requiring to be carefully guarded from a mere spirit of romance, still have their legitimate and beneficent sphere in the economy of a world of faith, and that it is well to have occasions to call them forth in a

cause where, after all, the real forever transcends our utmost ideal, and imagination falls below our soberest logic? The examples called forth thereby are channels for the illapse of modes of thought and feeling from a loftier and truer realm into our common life; similar in effect to those of martyrdoms in the ancient church.

It were easy to show that not only the primal impression, but also the continued conscious connection of the home with the foreign field, and the constant presentation of claims for a purely Christian ministration of men, money, personal labor and sacrifice, must be stimulant and purifying, and tending to keep the church in healthful sympathy with its original idea.

But argumentative detail is unnecessary. The foreign mission is clearly incorporate with the essential nature and orginal commission of the church, and is indissolubly connected with its purity and power. It originated in a foreign mission—if indeed anything is foreign to the blessed heaven—a mission from heaven to a lost world; and the foreign mission must ever be to it a vital ministrant function.

The argument from the life-principles of the church is confirmed by history, and God's methods of providence. Historically, the life-eras of the church have synchronized with the ministrant and missionary spirit, both as cause and effect. Through the darkest periods of Christianity, its life is traced through that spirit, sympathizing with it in its vigor or decay. Where this spirit has failed, Christianity itself has seemed to die. Where it has lived, even in crude and crass form, there, notwithstanding errors and offences in doctrine and government, Christianity has lived on, under all and in spite of all; each marked renewal of Christian life or reform in the church, being marked by a revival of this spirit.

To this spirit, moreover, developing itself in missions, Christianity owes what extension it has achieved. Various mundane agencies God has used, as preparatory and auxiliary. But each new, genuine evangelization of nations has been through *express and formal missions*. When these have ceased, the frontiers of Christendom have ceased to widen,—often have shrunk.

God has, moreover, by his providence, enforced the ministrant

action of the church, expressly enjoined in the Great Commission. Whenever she has seemed settling down in mere self-maintenance or self-culture, and in contentment with past victories and acquired domain, the Providence that ever watches over her has permitted her repose to be perturbed. Persecution and convulsion, invasions or immigrations have aroused and proved her, broken up stagnation, brought her to ministrant confession, scattered her members, and compelled their testimony among new peoples. So he broke up the early coagulation of the church about Jerusalem, by the persecutions connected with the martyrdoms of Stephen, James the greater, and James the less, and finally by the destruction of the city itself; compelling the disciples to go abroad, everywhere proclaiming the kingdom of God. To the same intent wrought the persecutions of pagan Rome. So of the church, nominally mistress of the empire. Its stagnancy, tending to rapid corruption, was broken up by the invasion and migration of nations, which enforced the ministration of Christian life and truth to the heathen, by captivities, dispersions, enslavements; or led to formal missions to the Goths and Germanic tribes, whereby the edge of the barbaric sword was broken, so that, in the overthrow of the Roman world, it did not rage utterly against the church and Christian institutions. So the overflow of ancient Christendom by the barbarians, compelled the ministration of Christianity to new nations, by contact under pressure, and constrained the church to be missionary in order to self-preservation.

But political changes were not factors of evangelization, or real conversion. These were wrought only by the ministrant and missionary agency to which they furnished opportunity, occasions, or necessity. The same was the fact under the sword of the Merovingians and Carlovingians, and of the new Germanic empire. It was the mission that followed the sword, ministrant of truth and love, and of personal labor, sacrifice and suffering, that converted a nominal and enforced into actual Christianization. It is to missionaries mainly from the Irish and Anglican church—the Winifreds and Willebrods, the Columbans and St. Galls, and their successors, the Ansgars, Ottos, Adelberts and their coadjutors—it is to the devotion and

self-sacrifice of those engaged in personal missions, and for the love of Christ and of souls penetrating forests, crossing wintry rivers, braving frost and storm, the miasma of marsh and the terrors of savage nature and more savage men—it is to these individual missionaries more than to armies or edicts of force, that nations, now the mightiest in Europe, owe their Christianity.

The same was the law of Christian life and spread under the era of spiritual despotism. It was not the church imperial, throned and sceptred on the seven hills, arrayed in purple and scarlet, arrogating universal lordship, fulminating interdicts and instituting inquisitions, claiming to coerce the faith and submission of the world, and to be ministered to of all nations,—it was not this, but the church ministrant in the wilderness,—the church of the cottage, the hut, the hamlet, the cave and catacomb, amid the poor, the suffering, the humble, the wretched, in seclusion and often concealment, that bore the true succession of the kingdom of God on earth, and kept alive the true confession of Christ among men. The genuine succession runs through the church-ministrant, not the church imperial. God's seal of genuine apostolicity is on it. The transmission was through the living, not the dead. There is no *mortmain* in the kingdom of God,—no succession in dead hands.

Missions also betokened the revival of apostolic Christianity through the subsequent ages. Thus out of the Lutheran reform, —after the struggle for existence had ceased to tax all its energies,—and subsequently, out of the Whitfieldian and Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century, was evolved, largely, the spirit and enterprise of modern missions.

These missions, though yet mainly in their pioneer and preparatory stages, have accomplished enough to demonstrate the proposition, that through the *express and formal mission*,— not by commerce or conquest, or the contact of civilizations,— the evangelization of heathen nations is to be effected and the domain of genuine Christendom to be extended. *Already* vast results, not in preparation only, but in actual achievement; not in the realm of *ideas* alone, but in change of *institutions;* not in impression on popular thought merely, but in the spiritual

conversion of multitudes, attest the continued potency of genuine ministrant Christianity, and the presence of the new creative Spirit. "The handful of corn on the top of the mountains,"—"the fruit thereof" has already shaken "like Lebanon." And slow as the process has seemed to us, it has been rapid beyond the precedent of former ages. In historic comparison, the prophetic declaration seems truly verified, that nations are born in a day.

Again, the church ministrant is not only the great diffuser of the Christian faith, but is also the *proper conservator and elaborator of that faith*, i. e., *of a pure theology*. Such a theology is not so much wrought out in the *schools* as in *life*,—is less the product of speculative *dialectics*, than of practical *uses* and *exigencies*. The truth and value of dogmas are gauged fitly by their relation to the great problem to be accomplished—the conversion of the world.

Arms and armor are best elaborated and tested in actual warfare. Use discovers and perfects instruments. The science of a power is wrought out from its practical application, as that of steam by millions of brains and hands in innumerable operative fields. So keeping men in constant presence and practical use of great natural forces, imparts a perpetual consciousness of their reality and potency; teaches their proper correlation and coordination; and gives a quick faculty in their harmonious application. So a true theology is best appreciated, gauged and adjusted, as well as most profoundly believed, in practical converse with the great problem of human salvation. It is likeliest to be found in minds in intensest sympathy with the original life-spirit and aim of the mission of Christ, as the solar system is best comprehended from a stand-point on its central orb.

Not by synods or sorbonnes, so much as by practical ministries, has the faith of the church been conserved and developed. Men thrown amid the actual dynamics of nature are little likely to doubt the law of gravitation. Those engaged in callings requiring practical converse with astronomical phenomena, will feel little need of resort to assemblies of savans to re-enact, from time to time, with formal solemnity, the dogma of the Copernican system.

Movement, moreover, and endeavor along the line of the church's original mission, will tend to purify both faith and life, and to give it power of conservative regimen. The vessel that, without power of guidance, is wrecked on the dead surges, can feel her helm only when she feels the propelling wind or steam. Waters that ferment when stagnant, and breed all corrupt and venomous things, become rivers of life as they flow. Such is the law of life in the church. It waits on ministrant movement.

Missions, again, are the great *unitive forces* of the church, the great means of truly realizing the prayer of our Lord for the oneness of his disciples. What we vainly reach after by contemplation of differences, and attempts to harmonize or annihilate them, is naturally achieved by supreme ministry to a common end; as the life-struggle of nations silences, for the time, the strifes of political parties, one common, supreme enterprise unites by subordinating and correlating all minor individual interests and tenets. As the waters of the Mississippi valley, from the Alleghany to the Rocky Mountains, widely asunder and with currents most diverse, defy all the engineers and Hibernians of the earth to unite them, but brought under one great law, move from all their springs to swell one mighty stream, and laterals that threatened to stay or deflect, augment and accelerate the march of the waters to the sea. Forces that, working within, convulse, directed to one objective aim, minister strength. In a great conflagration, the most impracticable material is converted into fuel.

Thus missions are exponents and factors of ecclesiastic life, purity and progress, and the *effort for the conversion of the world is coronal to all ministries for the prosperity of the church.*

But why go abroad? Why not wait the objects of missions brought, as they are being brought, in a migration of nations, to our own shores? Because both history and reason show that Carthage must be conquered in Africa. Streams are purified most readily at the fountain. Immigrant masses are most readily rendered innocuous and beneficent by missions directed toward the countries which are the centres and foci of false faiths, from

which they largely come. Missions in both directions, domestic and foreign, are requisite and mutually supplemental. Indeed, such is the oneness of humanity now developed, that the only way to permanently save one nation, evidently is to save all; to leave no exterior circle of barbarism or falsehood to breed infection or attack; no outside Gog and Magog, to bring war anew on the camp of the saints.

Evidently, therefore, the coming of the Lord waits the true ministration of the church. The world waits this coronal proof. And the hour of coronal proof we believe will be the hour of coronal triumph. Rationalism, now the subtlest and deadliest of antagonists to the gospel, which relies not on out-arguing, but on out-living and out-growing Christianity, will be confuted and confounded by the actual proof of its immortality of life and vigor; must despair as it sees the ministrant Christ still manifestly living in the ministrant church, and leading her on, conquering and to conquer.

The cause, therefore, now summons the church to the utmost development and energizing of all her ministrant agencies. The call is to all the blood-bought in every place and every sphere. not for detached and selected regiments or troops of the line alone, but for a "land-wehr" and "land-sturm." The ministrant activity must quicken through each class and order, and with entire consecration of all elements of power, material or ideal, spiritual or temporal. The brain and heart, the gold and silver, the personal energies and influence of each; all business, all callings, all are to be held as ministrant means to the Great Cause. On the very bells of the horses is to be written, "Holiness to the Lord."

In summing up our argument, among the principles evolved from our theme and from the history of the church, we note the following,—1st, *The conversion of the world is to be wrought through the church ministrant, directly lifting up the crucified Christ before the nations;*—lifting him up by self-ministrations that are constant representations of his vicarious sacrifice, and that constantly evidence in the church the presence of him who gave his life a ransom for many. This is the essential, vital, capital agency for the conversion of the world. Other influences,

as those of commerce, intercourse, political institutions, educational culture, contact of civilizations, or extensions of empire, may pioneer, prepare, or co-operate. But they are not to be waited for or relied on, and are utterly inadequate without direct evangelizing effort. Without such effort, indeed, weaker nations are not saved, but perish by contact with superior civilizations. For the conversion of nations we must look to the direct ministration of the gospel,—now and ever, and to all men, "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." Culture and civilization may be auxiliaries, and are to be expected as results of evangelization, but are not to be insisted on or waited for as pre-requisite antecedents.

2d. *The most vital of all our ministries to missionary churches is that of the ministrant spirit itself.* This alone can develope and stimulate their life-power. For this our ministrations must consult. Continual material support may dwarf and paralyze its beneficiaries, and prevent natural growth and development. But self-ministry secured, secures not only self-sustentation but self-diffusion. The Christianity thus planted will be Christ-like. It will be vital and self-propagating. It will develope itself in native growth and the production of native preachers and pastors, and native missions.

3d. In order to the development of this self-ministry in missionary churches, *they must, as speedily as practicable, be wrought to self-government, and be left to develope and order themselves according to the law of Christian liberty.* Freedom is the element of ministration. It is requisite to the full culture and application of ministrant energies. Without it there is no permanent vitality, no development of self-sustaining or of life-diffusing power. There is peril of perpetual nonage and impotency—that you may have in the end only a home bureau with foreign outposts—an East India house and a factory.

4th. This ecclesiastical independency, or self-regimen in the missions, is to be *protected from individualism or selfish isolation, from anarchism, faction, schism, and perversions of faith, by the Christ-like ministrant spirit developed in it.* This spirit must become a reliance for the communion of the

churches, which is only a communion of mutual ministries, helps, counsels and sympathies; and also, as the best safeguard for Christian brotherhood and equality against a spirit of ambition or domination; even as this same spirit is expressly enjoined by our Lord as antidote to emulations, rivalries and usurpations of lordship among his disciples. It will also be, as we have shown, the most effective assurance of substantive purity of the faith—a living and a practical one.

Thus this principle, inwrought, tends to secure in the mission churches life and order, unity and freedom; the speculative, regulated and conserved by the practical; that blending of individual spontaneity with organic solidarity, which constitutes the acme of social power, such as was largely represented in the primitive ecclesiastical type, by which Christianity was propagated through the ancient Roman world, and which will ever be found possessed of equal fitness and power; giving now, as it did then, the freest play to the great organic agencies of truth, liberty and love, and the influences of the ever-present Spirit.

5th. *Missions must be sustained abroad by such means as shall most widely diffuse the ministrant spirit among the churches at home.* This needs to be cultivated, as much for their own life as for that of the missions they sustain; and that not only among particular sections, classes, or individuals, but universally.

6th. Missionary ministrations, as a normal and perpetual, not exceptional or spasmodic agency of the church, *must be rendered in patience of hope and of faith in the divine promise and the divine Spirit, and in reliance for success, not on eclat, or pageant, or force, or artifice, but on the patient ministry of truth and love, of suffering and sacrifice.* With our Lord as leader, we are to walk by faith in this highway, knowing it will at last emerge in light.

7th. It is now evident that the conversion of the world *waits upon the re-baptism of the church into its original life-spirit.* She must come up more to the scriptural ideal, the Christly model,—must hear and obey the voice of the Master,—before her prayer, going up through the ages, shall be answered. She

must manifest Christ "lifted up" by ministering her all, her very self, for the redemption of the world; must feel that this is her work in this world, *her business*, the business of each and every member, everywhere and at all times.

8th. *It is evident that the church is to be wrought to this ideal chiefly through missions themselves.* The culture is in the process; the preparation in the endeavor. By shining she grows light. If the church, in large portions of it, is far removed from that model, it will be by quickening the parts most living that those most dead will be delivered from torpor, and the whole body from mortification. To fit ourselves for the work of the world's conversion, we must in earnest address ourselves to it; and not in masses and societies alone. Primitive evangelization was chiefly through the mission of the individual, solitary, or with few associates. We must see to it that in our superior system we lose not the original spirit, and the sense of individual responsibility in every class and sphere.

9th. Especially, one part of the church, embracing more than half its members, peculiarly endowed with ministrant instinct and faculty, and whose influence on our entire civilization, though subtle, delicate and silent, is as potent as that of the imponderables—light, heat and electricity—in the material world, must be more drawn into conscious sympathy and co-operation with this great movement. *The feminine element, so prominent in the primitive evangelic mission*, though much lost sight of in subsequent ages,—when the ministrant church disappears more from history and becomes largely merged in the imperial and despotic,—*must be more fully utilized.*

It is auspicious for the times that woman is being extensively aroused anew to a consciousness of privilege, power and responsibility in this interest. Her peculiar spheres and avenues of influence; her privileged admission to the homes and the domestic life of peoples; her exclusive access to half the population; and the fact that civilization and evangelization never go by halves; these things are becoming more recognized in the missionary economy.

The gospel, indeed, puts especial honor on woman. It utilizes and sceptres her peculiar gifts. In its system, her function

is most potent if not regent. The virtues and graces which seem most germane to her nature, her gentleness, delicacy and sympathy, that apply themselves with loving intuition and felicity of tact, and in patient and quiet sacrifice to ministries for others, are in especial power and honor in the kingdom of Christ. In truth, in accordance with that perfect completeness which attaches to him as a universal Saviour, there is much we feel as feminine—not effeminate—in the character of Christ himself; foreshadowing the potency and beauty of that element in the church he founded. The church now needs to call this element, embracing so large a portion of its members, into more active missionary sympathy and co-operation, at home and abroad.

Gladly and hopefully we now welcome woman to the successorship of the Marys, Marthas, Salomes and others, who ministered to our Lord in his walk on earth, and were 'last at the cross and earliest at the grave,' and to that of the Syntiches, and Priscillas, and Euodiases, and those women who labored with Paul and the Philippian church, in the work of the gospel. The forces of motherhood, wifehood, sisterhood, daughterhood, and those quicker sympathies and affections,—those subtle and delicate, yet most potent influences which are the prerogative of woman,—these belong with especial propriety to the church, and are to be enlisted for its triumph at home and in foreign lands.

In the great social stir of the times—when woman is repudiating the old idea of a mere inert and frivolous, or of a pageant or drudge life, and is aspiring to spheres wider, loftier and nobler, whatever we may think of issues contested in other directions, there opens to her here, beyond caption, cavil or controversy, a field for which she has especial endowments of heaven, than which none grander, more beautiful, or more beneficent, is found among the daughters or sons of men; a future to which a ministrant church, and ministering angels, and the ministering Christ welcome her.

Indeed the cause invites and requires all, learned or unlearned, weak or strong, "young men and maidens, old men and children;" all faculties, gifts, graces, temperaments, vocations, spheres. It is constituted of all, demands all, utilizes all elements of influence or power. Each Christian, as he or she

hopes for pardon, divine heirship, kingship and eternal glory through the blood of the Son of God, is bound thereby to minister all of life and being to it. The conflict between light and darkness, love and hate, in which every Christian has enlisted, has no truce, no remission, no lull, no neutral place or party, knows no stationary border, till the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord. In this conflict, moreover, where militancy is ministry; the weapons, truth and love; strategy, self-sacrifice; success, the giving up of all; and happiness, self-oblivion; where also the gentlest things are the mightiest, the humblest are the loftiest, the most delicate the strongest, and childlike love and trust transcends all the wisdom of all the schools; yea, where "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," more than all the sabaoth of the heavens, is God's praise to be perfected; and where, by "the weak things of the world God casts down the things that are mighty, and by the things which are not, brings to naught the things which are,"—in such a conflict, every element—the subtlest and obscurest—is in requisition and has its value, read only in the notation of God. Each member of the elect host, in whatever sphere or home, is a power, and is enlisted, not for his own salvation only, but for the salvation of a world. For this we all are to live, to labor and pray, and to give and endure, as long as we walk beneath the sun; not at home, never at rest, never at peace, till behind us are the doors of the City of Light. Meantime, the sweetest, kingliest, divinest thing we—the mightiest or meanest alike—can do, is to minister our entire being to it. So all shall walk at last with those who, in elder times, "obtained a good report through faith;" so stand with those who stand on the sea of glass and have gotten the victory, by "not loving their lives unto the death."

> "Where white-robed saints, the star-thrones singing under,
> Their state all meekly wear;
> Whose ceaseless praise goes up from hearts that wonder
> That ever they came there."

So all shall at last wear the glory of Him "who, being in the form of God, took on him the form of a servant," and came from

the highest throne of the highest heaven, "not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Whom God, therefore, "hath highly exalted, and given a name which is above every name." So shall we surely, even in this life, be children of him whose name and nature, and whose effluent and ineffable glory is Love.

Beloved friends, wheresoever and in whatsoever sphere may be to us God's allotment of labor, let us work on in patience of love and faith, devoting our life's force to building the temple of the Lord. We know not how or what we build. But the Great Architect is above, and millions infinite of ministries, under his plan, are wrought into its scheme. In darkness and deeps though it be; in difficulties, discouragements, and seeming disasters; or in mingled light and shadow, success and failure, defeat and victory, and celestial glories glimpsing athwart a field of toil, sorrows and graves,—however it may be, it is ours ever, in childlike trust, to build on. Through all, the mighty structure shall surely rise—is rising. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills," and our eyes shall surely, at last, behold it.

It is typed by nature herself, in her high places in the material world, where often, to one emerging from a mazy, tangled and difficult climb, upon some lofty mountain, a glory of the earth and sky suddenly breaks upon him, like a new Jerusalem let down from heaven. Thus, recently, as after a toilsome clamber through forest-glooms, and wilds formless and desolate, and up arduous steeps, I emerged upon one of the loftiest peaks of the Adirondacks, there was suddenly revealed a scene such as our eyes may rarely behold this side the Golden City, and which seemed to type the Coronal Temple itself.

I seemed standing as in the presence of one of God's great ministers. The "Gothic Mountains," fitly so named, rising immediately before me, with awful mural steeps, castellated with cliffy turret and battlement, and their white escarpments, or sharp cut, salient angles, wrought by the elements into wondrous tracery, and mysterious symbol, carved or emblazoned, with

semblance of cross and sacred emblem, or of column, oriel, pointed arch or half-swung portal, seemed as the façade of some vast cathedral, surmounted with sweep on sweep of ridge and peak above and beyond, that appeared as frieze and architrave of its mighty entablature; while farther on, and higher, crowning the stupendous pile, and girt round with lesser heights that stretched as satellites, pinnacles and cupolas, to the horizon's utmost verge, upsprang the central dome, the mighty Tahawas itself, and under a sky "so cloudless, deep, and purely beautiful, that God alone was to be seen in heaven."

As I emerged on this view, I saw before me, emblazoned, "the mountain of the Lord's house established in the top of the mountains." Over what an agony and ruin of nature upheaved, in what gloomy and formless deeps founded, was that glorious pile! From what dismal disorder of marsh and fen, and cliff and flood, and forest it rose! From what confusions of nooks and vales hidden in beauty, and crystal cascade and rivulet, and flowers of wondrous sweetness, strangely blent with poisonous growths and wilds deform, rocks, caves, bogs, dens and shades of death! Yet from all this at last uprose—what a visible hallelujah of the mountains and the sky! A liturgy statuesque in eternal granite!

Even so God builds the mountain of his house against the latter day. Out of glooms and deeps, cycles of disaster and agony, wildernesses of toil, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain, strangely mingling with visions of celestial sweetness and beauty, and touched often with gleams of light and joy from higher worlds, upsprings, at last, the coronal glory! That glory all the faithful at last shall surely see; see as wrought out of God, in part from their own true work. And when goes up the coronation hymn, all shall share in it. Not as in earthly triumphs, where the true victors often sleep lone and afar, beyond the festal blaze, — not so when moves the last great triumph up heaven's Capitoline, and the mighty anthem climbs the crystalline to the Central Throne, all the faithful, wherever they have gone to their rest,—in China or India, in Afric sands or the deeps of ocean, or in Christian Europe or America, under the shadows of the old church-yard,—all shall bear a part in the

universal refrain — "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever."